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JAY NIXON

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Governor Jay Nixon's Speeches

January 12, 2009

Inaugural Address of Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon 55th Governor of Missouri

"A New Day for Missouri"

Thank you, Justice Stith.

Thank you, President Pro Tem Shields and Speaker Richard.

Gov. and Mrs. Blunt, thank you both for your years of service to the state of Missouri. As you move on to new opportunities, I wish your family all the best.

I welcome Senators Bond and McCaskill, the other members of our Congressional delegation and the members of the Missouri General Assembly who have joined us today.

I'm joined today by Missouri's new First Lady and the love of my life, Georganne Nixon. And we're proud to be joined by our sons, Jeremiah and Will, and the rest of our family.

And I thank all of you for coming out today.

Well, here we are. Together, in the heart of winter. Here from different corners of the state. From different walks of life.

But today we stand united – as much as any time in history. United as Americans. And as Missourians.

United by the common uncertainty of our future. Not knowing what tomorrow will bring.

Worried that this economic downturn will mean that our children may not have every opportunity that we've had.

The challenges we face are historic. But so are the opportunities.

Ladies and gentlemen: Today marks a new day for Missouri.

Today, we make a fresh start. It's a day on which we separate the shortcomings of yesterday from the hope of tomorrow.

Today, we stop thinking about what should have been. And we start creating the future we all deserve.

Today, we turn the page.

Together, we mark a new day for Missouri.

Here in the Show-Me State, we have honorable and hardworking people. Skilled and talented workers and craftsmen.

But too many Missourians can't make ends meet in the job they're in, can't find the job they want, or fear they may lose the job they have. Too many Missourians are working harder and harder, but they are not getting ahead.

The current economic downturn has certainly made these problems worse, and immediate action is needed. But in tackling the problems of today, we must not lose sight of the longer-term challenge: to boldly move Missouri's economy into the 21st Century.

The world around us is changing, and it's happening quickly. The new economy is upon us.

The people of this great state have never waited for the future; we've always sought it out. We are a state born from pioneers and innovators.

In the 19th Century, Daniel Boone and Lewis and Clark helped pave the way for a new state to take its place in a still-imperfect nation. Their Missouri stories are now legend.

And at the start of the 20th Century, George Washington Carver, a young man born into slavery, forever changed the agriculture industry for the entire world.



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We have a history of overcoming adversity with innovation. And just as our forebears inspired a nation by settling a new land west of the Mississippi in the first days of the 19th Century, so today Missourians must lead our nation by seizing the new opportunities of the 21st Century.

Here in Missouri, we will not only compete. We will lead.

This new economy requires a new day for Missouri.

We'll turn this economy around by making Missouri a magnet for next-generation jobs.

We'll invest in new technology. We'll inspire cutting-edge innovation. And we'll embrace science, not fear it.

And not only will we lead with our ideas, we'll also lead with our greatest asset – our people. We must prepare our world-class workers with 21st-Century skills and connect them with the jobs of tomorrow that we will create.

The jobs that will lead our nation to energy independence.

The jobs that will build fuel-efficient automobiles and energy-efficient homes.

The jobs that will develop the lifesaving cures of tomorrow.

The jobs that will change the way we do business, change the way we travel and change the way we channel information.

All right here in Missouri.

To bring about a new day in Missouri, we'll need to implement new policies. But this new day will not be possible unless there is a new tone in Jefferson City.

Because for too many years, politics and partisanship have stood in the way of progress. And the people of Missouri are tired of it.

The family in Hannibal that's struggling to pay for health care has no appetite for partisan bickering in Jefferson City.

The new father in Rolla who had his job outsourced doesn't care if an economic stimulus plan was written by a Democrat or a Republican. He just wants to make ends meet for his young family.

And the small businesswoman struggling to keep the doors open on Main Street doesn't have a lobbyist walking the halls of the Capitol.

The only way we'll meet the needs of Missouri families is by working together. Putting our shared principles ahead of our political differences.

Now, new leadership in Jefferson City and in Washington isn't enough. The answers to our problems won't all come from government.

We need new leaders to step up in communities across our state – and I'm not just talking about elected officials.

Tough times call for a renewed sense of purpose. A new day for public service and volunteerism.

We need all Missourians to step up and do more to make our communities stronger.

We need more parents to get active in our local schools.

We need more role models to mentor our children and coach our youth sports teams.

We must get involved in our places of worship. Get involved in our local civic groups. Volunteer our time at senior homes.

Community service is not a chore or a burden. It's a responsibility, and an honor.

We will only turn our state around if we all do our part.

I grew up in De Soto, Mo. – a small town in Jefferson County. I go back frequently and visit with old friends. When I do, I'm reminded why our state is so strong.

It's because here in Missouri, we go to work early and stay late.

We love our families and our faith. We have a strong tradition of neighbor-helping-neighbor.

And when times are tough, we meet the challenges, and we always come back stronger.

I know a lot of folks around this state could use a fresh start. A new beginning.

But I also know that the best days for our families are still to come.

The next generation will be able to seize opportunities that we cannot even imagine today. We will protect our special way of life here in Missouri, while at the same time moving boldly to embrace the future.

Together, we can see that future. Today is a new day for Missouri.

It's a new day for every child in our state with big dreams.

It's a new day for the small-business owner who knows that with a little help, her hard work will pay off, and brighter days are ahead.

It's a new day for the family that recently sat around the kitchen table to decide if they should take out a second mortgage so that they can send their second child to college.

And it's a new day for the men and women who work day-in and day-out to build the best products in America. The autoworker, the construction worker, the lab technician and the engineer.

As your Governor, I will work every day to help make this brighter future a reality for all Missouri families.

I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to lead our state during this critical time.

As our family moves into the Governor's Mansion, we do so knowing that it's your house – not ours. And we hope you'll visit us often.

And together, we will make a new day for Missouri.

Thank you, and God bless.

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